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The Mellerud Emigration Conference

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Gen. Grant's tent stood on a little elevation, at the foot of which were several fresh wagon tracks. A number of officers, including myself, were standing and sitting around the general outside the tent. Gen. Grant, who was dressed in a fatigue suit and slouched hat, without other marks of distinction than three small silver stars, which could scarcely be distinguished on his dusty blouse, went toward the driver and, with the most minute particulars, gave him directions how to drive. While he was talking, we observed that the driver showed signs of deep emotion, and finally he alighted from the mule, which he was riding, stretched out his arms, and, with tears in his eyes, exclaimed: "Aiy God! I believe it is Gen. Grant! General, do you remember Tommy Donald? I was a soldier in your company during the Mexican War!" With touching kindness the

great commander-in-chief now took both hands of the ragged soldier in his, and, like old friends who had not met for a long time, they rejoiced in remembering the companionship of fifteen years before.

When Gen. Grant returned to the tent the conversation turned to the newspaper clamor and general discontent because Vicksburg was not yet taken, upon which the general expressed himself in the following words: "I could make another assault and hasten the capture a few days, but will not do it because I know positively that within ten days the garrison must surrender anyhow, for I have got them, and will take them all. Let them howl. I don't care. I have got Pemberton tight as wax." Saying which, he closed his right hand and laid it on the little camp table with such force that I noticed the veins filling and turning blue on

the back of his hand. These two little incidents give a key to Gen. Grant's whole character, and the secret of his unparalleled success, not only in winning battles, but in bagging the entire opposing force.

A week later Vicksburg fell into our hands. We took thirty-two thousand prisoners, fifteen generals, two thousand other officers, and nearly two hundred cannon.

(to be continued)

Hans Mattson published his memoirs first in Swedish with the title *Minnen*, printed in Lund 1890. The following year they were printed in English as Mattson, Hans, *Reminiscences, The Story of an Emigrant*. St. Paul, MN: D. D. Merrill Co., 1891.

The subtitles in the present SAG version have been added by the editor.

The 2008 Mellerud Emigration Conference

In the middle of August a group of dedicated emigration researchers assembled in Mellerud in Dalsland, Sweden, for a couple of conference days. Among the group members a number of Americans were also seen.

Some thirty participants spent all day Friday on a bus tour, which took us to the fragrant herb garden i Dals Rostock, where we could also listen to a key fiddle player and enjoy the museum. From there we went to Lästvik manor in Steneby parish, where the painted tapestries from the 1800s, showing various castles, in the dining hall were a most interesting sight. Here Elisabeth Thorsell spoke about Salt Lake City and The Swenson Center, places that then seemed like they were on another planet. Next the bus went to a nice inn, where we after lunch listened to Ted Rosvall and Anna-Lena Hultman explaining all about the Swedish CD databases.

Dalsland is not famous for its wide highways, so on the way back to

Mellerud, we travelled small backroads over the Kroppefjäll, but did not encounter any moose. Afterwards Lilly Setterdahl from Moline, IL, lectured on Dalsland people that she and her late husband Lennart had researched in the U.S.

Saturday was open to the public and held in the *Kulturbruket på Dal*, a local cultural institution, with a full day of lectures, mostly in Swedish. We could listen to lectures on the Swedish American Line, on the soldiers and the allotment system, on Gensline, on hidden sources for emigrant research, on female emigrants, on the coming EmiWeb, and on the Vasa Order of America. A popular session was presented by Owe Clapson on "Olle i Skratthult" with old songs and gags in the *bondkomik* tradition.

The lectures attracted a large crowd and the organizers could be very pleased at the end of the day, as the conference seemed to be a big success.

The day was ended with a *smör-*



gåsbord dinner at the "Värdshuset på Dal", where we all enjoyed the beautiful landscape and the sight of the sun, sinking into Lake Ännimmen.

There was already some talk about having another conference in a year or two, and it may be well worth the travel to Dalsland.



Anneli Andersson introducing Lilly Setterdahl and her lecture.